

ORTHODOX PROTESTS AGAINST BLASPHEMOUS DISPLAY IN GREEK NATIONAL GALLERY

Athens, March 10, 2025

The National Gallery in Athens. Photo: nationalgallery.gr

The National Gallery in Athens, Greece, is currently hosting an exhibition entitled *The Allure of the Bizarre*, which features several blasphemous works.

The exhibition opened on January 22 and is set to run through September 30, though it has caused strong reactions against the Orthodox clergy and faithful, including a petition calling for the exhibition to be removed, which states that the exhibition depicts the Lord, the Theotokos, and various saints “in an offensive, repulsive, degrading, blasphemous, and insulting manner.”

The [Gallery](#) explains that the exhibition is inspired by Francisco Goya (1746-1828), a Spanish romantic painter and printmaker, whose “engravings are distinguished by the verisimilitude of the monstrous, the persuasiveness of the absurd, and the attraction of the repulsive,” combining “everyday themes with incongruous, threatening, repulsive, or even difficult-to-interpret forms.”

On February 28, the Coordinating Committee of Faithful of the Holy Metropolis of Peristeri posted [a petition calling for the removal of the blasphemous display](#). As of this writing, it has 1,017 signatures with a goal of 2,000.

The petition reads:

From January 22, 2025, to September 30, 2025, the National Gallery is hosting an exhibition titled *The Allure of the Bizarre*. The exhibition includes works by Christophoros Katsadiotis, which present altered versions of hagiographies depicting the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Cross, the Virgin Mary, and various saints of the Church in an offensive, repulsive, degrading, blasphemous, and insulting manner.

We believe that these specific works exceed the limits of artistic freedom, as they deeply offend the faith of Orthodox Christians and the official religion of Greece, as enshrined in the Constitution.

The direct disrespect toward the sacred historical figures depicted violates at minimum the religious and cultural respect they deserve.

As Christian citizens who honor our cultural heritage, respect the sacred symbols of our faith, and align with the ideals that promote and defend the nation, we request the IMMEDIATE REMOVAL of these blasphemous works from the exhibition space of the National Gallery.

[Sign this petition](#) to collectively express our opposition and ensure respect for our faith and cultural identity.

Met. Theoklitos of Vresthena (left), Met. Nektarios of Corfu (right). Photo: Romfea

The exhibition was also condemned by His Eminence Metropolitan Nektarios of Corfu yesterday, in his words for the Sunday of Orthodoxy, which celebrates the sacred images of the Lord, His Mother, and the saints.

“My soul and heart are grieved,” His Eminence said. “We will not accept this ridicule.”

Read his [full statement](#) on the matter:

It came to my knowledge through the Internet that during this period, with the tolerance of the Ministry of Culture, an exhibition of obscene content is being hosted at the National Gallery, in which images of God, St. George, the Crucifixion of the Lord on Golgotha, St. Christopher, and our Virgin Mary are ridiculed. And not only that, but there is also a painting that, according to those who believe in this kind of culture, depicts the bishop and the holy clergy loaded into a garbage bin. Is this the understanding that prevails in our state and the Ministry of Culture? Is this for them the image of God, which is insulted, deposed, denounced not only in the faces of the saints but also of people? Is this what the holy clergy offered to our homeland? The Orthodox faith which kept this people in cohesion who received various attacks?

My soul and heart are grieved. That is why I address you, most excellent rulers, who represent the state, and I ask you to convey this message and the grief of the heart of the humble bishop. We will not accept this ridicule, because our homeland lived and was founded on this immaculate and unchanged faith. No one can distinguish the genuine Greek from the Orthodox Christian. Let all those who desire the demolition of the image of God and the image of man that God has given us take this into account.

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